

STATEMENT BY JOSEPH S LUPPINO
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IN OPPOSITION TO HB 5360
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY – GENERAL LAWS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2012

My name is Joseph S Luppino; I am the Director of Public Affairs for Red Bull North America. Red Bull appreciates the opportunity to participate in this public hearing and speak to you about House Bill 5360. We wish to speak specifically to the provision which would prohibit the sale of energy drinks containing caffeine, caffeine derivatives, guarana or taurine to persons under the age of 18 years.

Red Bull was founded in 1984 and started selling Red Bull Energy Drink in 1987; with its launch it created a totally new product category --- the modern energy drink. Since 1987, around 30 billion cans of Red Bull have been consumed in more than 160 countries around the world. Last year alone, in the United States more than 1 billion cans of Red Bull were sold. Today, Red Bull remains the world's #1 energy drink.

Red Bull shares the commitment of the Connecticut General Assembly to ensure that consumers have access to safe and quality foods and beverages. However, we believe the provisions within House Bill 5360 relating to energy drinks are unwarranted given the scientific evidence-base and the current regulatory scheme for energy drinks in the United States.

Red Bull (and the vast majority of mainstream energy drinks) contains 80 mg of caffeine per 250 ml can, less than the amount in one cup of coffee. It is less than one-half the amount of caffeine in a standard coffee purchased from the most popular coffee chain in the United States. In addition, in line with industry standards agreed to by members of the American Beverage Association, Red Bull labels clearly and voluntarily indicate the quantity of caffeine the product contains.

Caffeine is found in a variety of consumable products ranging from beverages to chocolates to over-the-counter medicines. In the United States consumers get a minimal amount of caffeine from energy drinks compared to other sources. According to an intake estimate from the US Food and Drug Administration from 2009, US consumers (including teens and young adults) get about 70% of their caffeine from sources such as coffee, tea and cocoa beverages. They get the remaining 30% from other beverages – including soft drinks and energy drinks --- chocolate products and other caffeine-containing products.

Many scientific and regulatory bodies around the world such as Health Canada and the European Food Safety Authority have concluded that the general population of healthy adults may safely consume up to 300-400 mg of caffeine per day. This intake level has been supported by the US FDA and the American Medical Association which recommend consumption in the same range.

The safety of Red Bull is based upon sound science and has been validated by health authorities around the world and scientific expert panel in the European Union, Australia and New Zealand. Most recently, in 2009, the European equivalent of the US FDA (EFSA) reviewed more than 70 of the most recent scientific articles, papers and safety studies on the ingredients used in Red Bull. The review concluded that the key ingredients of caffeine, taurine and glucuronolactone were safe. They also concluded that there is no harmful interaction from the combination of these ingredients in energy drinks. This EFSA opinion, which is comparable to the GRAS assessment process of the FDA, concluded this after a ten-year review of the safety assessment of energy drinks and their ingredients.

As stated earlier, Red Bull has been sold across the United States since 1997. Not a single legal jurisdiction anywhere in America has seen fit to restrict the sale of Red Bull, or any energy drink, to any legal class of citizens. It would be unprecedented and unfounded for the state of Connecticut to impose such restrictions and we strongly urge the General Laws Committee to reject this provision of House Bill 5360.

Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to speak with you today.